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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a Senator from the State of Colorado.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Dr. Richard Foth.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Shall we pray.

Almighty God, creator of heaven and Earth, creator of each of us, we thank You for this day. This is the day You have made, and we "will rejoice and be glad in it."

As our Senators conduct the business of the Nation, pressing to determine critical issues before year's end, we pray for them a baptism of patience and clear seeing. Give them the strength to press on the issues and the capacity to give and receive personal grace in the heat of battle.

In the confluence of political pressures and seasonal celebrations of good will, we pause to recognize our need of You, Lord. We are grateful for Your sovereignty in the world and Your designed place in our lives. You are indeed, Immanuel, "God with us."

In Your Holy Name we pray. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WAYNE ALLARD led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 13, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a Senator from the State of Colorado, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ALLARD thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today, after a period of morning business, the Senate will debate the Bahrain Free Trade Agreement under a 60-minute time agreement reached last night. Later today, we will also begin debate on the motions to instruct conferees with respect to the deficit reduction bill. We hope to have a unanimous consent agreement ready which will lock in those motions for debate and votes. We are still trying to determine exactly when those stacked votes will occur, and I will announce that shortly as we get closer to an agreement. Members should adjust their schedules to

accommodate a lengthy week and possible weekend session so that we may complete our business and then go home for the holidays.

IRAQI DEMOCRACY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I wish to comment just very briefly on what is going on over the course of this week in Iraq, as it focuses on Iraqi democracy and the process that has begun in this country today and will continue through Thursday when the elections are carried out in Iraq.

Earlier this morning, I had the opportunity to talk at the White House in a meeting by teleconference with our Ambassador to Iraq, in Iraq, and General George Casey about the remarkable progress going on in that country today as they updated us with the plans for the elections, what is underway, and looking back to the tremendous progress that has been made over the last several months and the truly remarkable progress that has been made in the elections in January and October and now the preparations made for the elections this week.

On Thursday, the Iraqi people began what is a historic process for choosing their first fully constitutional parliament since the fall of Saddam, culminating in this nationwide vote on Thursday, December 15. In our briefings this morning, it was pointed out that the elections are Thursday and many of us will be watching to see how large a turnout there will be, recognizing that 10 million people turned out for the last elections in October.

Our briefers also pointed out the fact that we have to moderate our expectations a little bit in terms of the overall timing because of the sequence of the events with the elections on Thursday and then a preliminary certification of the elections about a week later and then a final certification in early January, around January 6 or 7. The government itself becomes a product of that

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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parliament, and that will not be finalized until April of next year, but the process has begun, and the votes, even among Iraqis in this country right now, are beginning today.

The country, as we think back just 2½ years ago, that was ruled by tyranny and despotism is, with the help of American and coalition forces, transforming itself into a hopeful and democratic society. That hope is being felt by the Iraqi people as they move forward, rebuilding and renewing their country.

In yesterday's widely reported new polling data, the Iraqis believe their lives are going well, with nearly two-thirds expecting that things will improve in the months and years ahead. Average household incomes have skyrocketed by 60 percent in the last 20 months, and Iraqis are quickly joining the swift current of modernity with cell phones and the Internet, cars, washing machines, and satellite dishes. Even ABC News, which commissioned the poll, rates the Iraqi mood at "a remarkable level of optimism."

In Thursday's elections, we will also have marked yet another milestone in their transition from dictatorship to democracy. Just in the past year, we have witnessed a series of truly extraordinary events. Last January, 8.5 million Iraqis defied the terrorists and marched to the polls. Who will ever forget the remarkable picture of Iraqis proudly displaying their purple-stained finger, citing that freedom, that ability to vote. They showed the world their readiness and eagerness to participate in a new system of government.

Throughout the summer, Iraq's leaders worked through the painful give-and-take process of drafting the nation's permanent constitution. Even though much of Iraq's Sunni Arab population boycotted the January elections, Iraq's elected officials worked hard to reach out and include the Sunni Arab representatives in the constitution-drafting process. They understood the importance of including leaders from all of Iraq's ethnic and religious communities in such a historic endeavor. As we saw by summer's end, their patience, compromise, and inclusion paid off. The draft they produced established the framework for a stable and democratic Iraq at the heart of the Middle East. Their new constitution safeguards individual minority rights, guarantees the protection of human rights, and creates a system of government based on the rule of law and the will of the Iraqi people.

In October, the Iraqi people turned out again, in overwhelming numbers, to ratify their permanent constitution. More than 10 million Iraqis across religious and ethnic lines went to the polls to demonstrate their growing desire to have their voice heard in a democratic political process.

Most of the increase in voter turnout came in Sunni areas of the country.

As the political process continues to unfold, Iraq's Sunni Arabs are coming

to recognize the importance of taking part in that democratic process.

Only through peaceful politics can the Sunni Arab community in Iraq ensure that its rights are secured, its interests protected, and its people represented at the national, provincial, and local levels.

Even though many Sunnis voted against Iraq's permanent constitution, the trend line of increased political participation among the Sunni population is heading up.

This morning, we were briefed directly from Iraq. The number of polling stations in the Sunni parts of the country are increasing dramatically day by day, much surpassing expectations.

More than 300 political parties and coalitions have registered for this week's elections. Candidates are campaigning, and the Iraqi people are again showing their willingness to defy terrorist threats and participate—and participate actively—in the political process.

As President Bush articulated in his speech yesterday in Philadelphia, Iraq is that central front in the war on terror.

Their move to democracy is essential to our shared victory over terrorism.

It is not going to be easy.

We face an enemy who targets innocent civilians with bombings and beheadings—an enemy who despises freedom, that fears democracy. They will bend every effort to derail Iraq's continued progress until they are ultimately defeated.

But I am confident the Iraqi people will succeed and that together we will prevail over the terrorist enemy.

Time and time again, the Iraqi people have shown their friends and their enemies that they are steadfast in their determination to secure a bright, peaceful, and prosperous future for their children and for their grandchildren.

They will do so again on Thursday, this Thursday, December 15.

I applaud President Bush for his unwavering commitment to freedom and liberty for the Iraqi people. I applaud the Iraqi people for their unwavering courage to secure their democratic future.

The United States will continue to stand behind them as they work to become a peaceful, a united, a stable, and a secure and more prosperous nation, a full member of the international community and a full partner in the global war on terrorism.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, may I inquire as to the state of the Senate? Are we in morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. We are in morning business.

Mr. CRAIG. I thank the Chair. I will speak as in morning business.

CONTINUED DUMPING AND SUBSIDY OFFSET ACT

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, the leader, in opening the Senate this morning, said we would come to the floor later today to begin to debate motions to instruct the conferees on the budget resolution conference that is now underway and being negotiated between the House and the Senate.

Of course, that is critical to our going home—the process to finalize the work of the Congress this year. So for the next few moments, I wish to speak about two issues that are in that conference that will be a part of the debate this afternoon on the instruction of conferees.

The first one is what we call the Byrd amendment, also known as the Continued Dumping and Subsidy Offset Act.

To set the record straight, it is important to say that so people understand when I reference the Byrd amendment I am not talking about the Byrd rule as it relates to what can and cannot be inside the budget resolution but is, in fact, what Senator BYRD, I, and joined by others some time ago know as the Continued Dumping and Subsidy Offset Act.

As many Senators are aware, this amendment, the Byrd amendment, has had tremendous support in this body. In fact, in 2003, 70 Senators notified the President of our strong support for this provision. Further, just recently, 25 Republican Senators notified the majority leader of our strong opposition to any repeal of the Byrd amendment in the Deficit Reduction Act. I firmly believe those 25 Senators stand firm in their opposition to any repeal. A provision such as the Continued Dumping and Subsidy Offset Act that has so much support has no place whatsoever in the budget resolution or what we call the Deficit Reduction Act. However, some in this body are calling the Byrd amendment "corporate welfare." If people in this country call a provision that protects U.S. companies and manufacturers from intentional and illegal foreign dumping and in subsidies, so be it. You can call it anything you want, but that is the reality of the existing law. When foreign companies continue to dump and get subsidies even after an order goes into effect, the U.S. industry gets absolutely no benefit from that measure. The only way we can level the playing field in those instances is to prevent those duties to be distributed to the very American companies that are injured by those flagrant and illegal practices.

Some in this body would like to repeal the Byrd amendment because it has been estimated to result in \$3.2 billion in cost savings.

I have to tell you this estimate, in my opinion, is pure fabrication.

This year, for example, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that this act's provisions would come to \$800 million in fiscal year 2005. In reality, however, the figure was \$226 million. CBO's estimate was off by a factor of